

JAZZ/THOMAS CONFIRMATION HEARING

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Biden, abortion-rights backers square off over Thomas remarks

By JAMES HOWLEY

The Associated Press WASHINGTON — The Democratic chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee challenged Sen. J. Bennett "Tookie" Thomas' Tuesday remarks about the Supreme Court's abortion-rights decisions on Thursday, saying the remarks urged the peril of back-alley abortions.

Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware said Thomas' remarks posed an "abominable failure of logic" in

citing a 1987 speech Thomas gave that praised an anti-abortion bill. Biden made the comment as the representative of abortion-rights groups urged the Senate to reject Thomas' nomination to be the nation's second black Supreme Court Justice.

BIDEN

"The record shows that, if confirmed, Judge Thomas would indeed vote to take away this fundamental right — to take this nation back to the days when women had no alternative but the back alley for health care," said Karl Rove, director of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

But Biden disagreed, saying, "I do not find anywhere in the record on that issue where he evidenced extreme views."

Thomas testified that his praise of the article was a "throwaway line" intended to win support for his ideas on natural law and not an endorsement of its conclusion on abortion.

Biden's rebuttal Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., fire saying that a possible cloture vote on the nomination was his attendance at a Portland, Va. Episcopal church service in the anti-abortion movement. "I think that's absolutely, totally

completely irrelevant as a matter of principle, and I also think that it is irrelevant as to what Judge Thomas said, noting that he was one of the thousands of Catholics on the panel who support abortion rights."

Biden also rebuffed Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., fire saying that a possible cloture vote on the nomination was his attendance at a Portland, Va. Episcopal church service in the anti-abortion movement. "I think that's absolutely, totally

irrelevant as a matter of principle, and I also think that it is irrelevant as to what Judge Thomas said, noting that he was one of the thousands of Catholics on the panel who support abortion rights."

Thomas gave to "Inevitable Answer" by testifying that he had never discussed the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion. "He is probably the only lawyer in the country who could make that claim," Lewis said.

Liberal urges rejection of Thomas

By BOB DART

San News Service WASHINGTON — Rep. John Lewis told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday that he would not want his son to grow up to be the Judge Clarence Thomas.

Joining other Democratic members of the Congressional Black Caucus in opposing Thomas' elevation to the Supreme Court, the liberal congressman and the conservative black Republican from his state is also a role model for young African Americans.

"I think we want someone who is going to be a bright light rather than a lightbulb when it comes to the issue of simple justice and simple fairness," said Lewis, adding that Thomas "is not a role model I want for my son."

A veteran of the bloody civil rights movement through the 1960s, Lewis charged that Thomas benefited from affirmative action in his admission to Yale Law School, but now wants to deny such help to other black Americans.

"What you have is a someone who wants to destroy the bridge that brought him over troubled waters," said Lewis. "He wants to pull down the ladder that he climbed up."

Just because Thomas rose from poverty in a segregated Southwest to be nominated to the Supreme Court does not mean he should be confirmed, said Lewis.

"I am law the black entrepreneurs. I grew up in a family with a mother and a father and brothers and sisters. We were very poor, but we were equal to us on the highest court of the land."

"If you want to vote to confirm Clarence Thomas," he told his constituents, "you must have some reason other than the fact that he grew up poor in Pin Point, Ga."

The Atlanta congressman's testimony reflected the views of 25 of the 26 House members who compare the Black Caucus. The group's law Republican, Rep. Gary Franks of Connecticut, supports Thomas.

Abortion rights leaders warns against Thomas

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Kate Michelson, director of the National Abortion Rights Action League, detailed her personal experience with abortion Thursday while testifying at the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearing.

Michelson told the Senate Judiciary committee that she was a young woman of color who was a single mother of three children.

"I was devastated without money, a job or a car," she was even asked to get a charge account at the local five-and-dime.

"Almost immediately after my husband left me, I learned that I was pregnant."

"I was forced to appear before a hospital admission panel of four men. These complete strangers knew nothing about the most intimate and personal details of my life. It was humiliating... yet I had to win their permission."

"I was admitted to the hospital. Yet as I awaited the procedure, I was told 'I would not be able to have an abortion without written permission from the man who has fathered your child.' I was told that I was to be put to death if I did not get my permission."

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